

SANDS TOWNSHIP
APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO
BOARDS / COMMISSIONS

Name: _____ Home Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Employer: _____ Business Phone: _____

Occupation / Position: _____

Are you related to an elected official or employee of Sands Township? Yes No

If yes, explain _____

Do you or your employer have any business dealings with the Township which might present a conflict of interest? Yes No

If yes, explain _____

Serving on a Board or Commission can be time-consuming. Are you committed to attending all regularly scheduled meetings? _____

On which Board and/or Commissions would you be willing to serve?

Planning Commission ___ Zoning Board of Appeals ___ Board of Review ___

Please describe any qualifications, expertise or special interests that relate to your possible appointment:

Indicate reasons for desiring to serve: _____

What interest, if any, do you feel you represent in the community (ie.: agricultural, natural resources, recreation, education, public health, commerce, industry, etc.)

Applicant's Signature: _____

For Office use only

Received by: _____ Date: _____

Board Decision: _____

Desirable Personal Qualities of Zoning / Planning Commissioners

What qualities make for an effective zoning / planning commissioner? There is no perfect formula, of course, but below are four important elements.

Team Player – Given the disjointed flow of cases, how do new commissioners make decisions? In part, they take cues from more experienced ones or even seek their advice. Or, if a zoning / planning commission has worked together for a long time, individual commissioners may get to know each other so well that they easily form a consensus on the issues they face.

Ordinarily, this is a desirable relationship to have. But it may also mask a threat, the danger of “groupthink.” This phenomenon occurs when members of a group either do not ask the critical questions or, together, push them aside. Thus, individual commissioners need to develop a sense of when to be a team member by following the lead of others or by asking the difficult question.

Commitment – Knowing the legal dimensions of planning and zoning, good design techniques, group strategy, and knowing how to deal with the public are important. But underlying all of these is commissioners’ willingness to invest the time required to be effective as a group. It is more than time spent in meetings and taking telephone calls at dinner. There may be mounds of paper to read and contemplated. There is the time needed to learn the physical aspects of the community and personally inspect sites that are subjects of important votes. In addition, there are the more subtle social and economic dimensions of the township and how they function together to build “community.”

Integrity – Other sought after qualities include personal integrity and dedication to democratic procedure and outcomes. Some may find it difficult to stand against a group of residents who vehemently protest actions they dislike. Decisions to ban all mobile home parks, sanitary landfills, gravel pits and junkyards to some other community, for instance, may be popular. Individually, commissioners may even object to such land uses. It is important, however, that they understand the legal prohibitions against exclusionary zoning – using zoning to keep “undesired” development out of their township. Personal integrity may thus require them to override their own emotional preferences and vote to permit such land uses when facts so dictate.

Self-Directed – Finally, planning commissioners must be individuals who do not mind making their contribution in relative obscurity, seldom are they the subject of a feature newspaper or television report. Few in the community will thank them for their years of service, but not because the residents are an ungrateful lot. Rather, it is because few have the patience to track the results of community planning – the transformation of ideas to reality. The reward for planning commissioners is seeing plans that were once little more than pipedreams come to life.